GLOBAL SOFTWARE COMPANY LAYS GROUNDWORK FOR LONG-TERM GROWTH WITH CMS MIGRATION & MULTILINGUAL BLOG REDESIGN

CUSTOMER
LRS Enterprise Output Management

WEBSITE
LRSOutputManagement.com

INDUSTRY
Technology
CUSTOMER PROFILE
Levi, Ray & Shoup, Inc. (LRS) is a global provider of technology solutions with multiple lines of business. As a software division of LRS, the LRS Enterprise Output Management group (EOM) enables more than half of all Fortune Global 500 companies to streamline their output and print environments by eliminating print servers, printer specific hardware, software, and printers while providing simple yet powerful tools for managing the delivery of critical documents. Spanning six continents and a variety of industries, these organizations rely on EOM software and services to help them reduce document-related costs, simplify document-related infrastructures, and reduce the need for print-related hardware, software, and personnel.

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PRODUCT IMPLEMENTED
Antilles
Content Manager®
Challenge

Information technology professionals and IT partners from organizations in 30+ countries turn to the information-rich EOM website to research solutions to their printing problems. As the site sees heavy traffic, website downtime and breaks are simply not an option. Neither is an inflexible, overly-complex web platform that is slow to respond to the needs of a business moving at the speed of technology.

The software group decided to abandon a top-rated .NET content management system integrated with their website after enduring a five-year track record of underdelivery and overengineering. Instead of delivering the necessary functionality from the start, add-on features available with the out-of-favor CMS required time-consuming modifications from in-house developers to meet expectations.

These costly updates for minor enhancements involved a great deal of development time to recode complex third-party software. The customized apps invariably broke down or took the site offline whenever the CMS vendor released updates or when substantial new content was added to the site. Making matters worse, fixing the problems took far too long, and the EOM team ended up waiting in a long queue for product support help.

“A massive upgrade to a new version of the CMS was the final straw that broke the proverbial camel’s back,” said Louise Bartlett, EOM European Marketing Manager. “The site went down completely for a full half hour, and I knew we couldn’t remain handcuffed to a system that wouldn’t let us do what we wanted without seriously compromising our time and resources. We had to find a more reliable and adaptable solution that we could count on.”

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/// LOU BARTLETT

Once headed down the CMS conversion path, clear goals were established for the migration:

1. Protect previous search engine optimization efforts for over 1,200 pages, 200 documents, and 75 forms to maintain optimal search engine rankings.
2. Ensure the new functionality and architecture worked properly before the new CMS went live to guarantee a positive end user experience without breaks or down time.
3. Upgrade the blog to a customized design to provide a more aesthetically-pleasing look in five different languages for an international audience.
4. Integrate a user-friendly CMS simple enough for anyone on the marketing administration team to utilize.
Solution

EOM looked inward and chose LRS® Antilles Content Manager to power its site. This simple yet robust tool, built on the .NET framework by LRS Web Solutions, was developed with customization of features in mind: Blog, Form Builder, Learn More, Events, List Builder, and CRM software integration.

“Ongoing developmental updates with LRS Antilles keep the backend users’ objectives a priority,” said Scott Mehring, LRS Web Solutions project manager for the migration. “A lot of the frustration with the previous CMS had to do with the admin area, which was slow, cumbersome, and incredibly complex for the novice user. With LRS Antilles, anyone managing a website can figure things out because it’s so easy to learn.”

To safeguard SEO efforts and ensure functionality, the entire site was duplicated and rebuilt on the LRS Antilles framework. “The static environment was invaluable for pre-launch testing so we knew beforehand that every piece was in place for a smooth transition,” said Bartlett. “Going live with our previous CMS was always stressful, and it was a guessing game as to whether things would actually work or not. The brilliant benefit of the LRS Antilles approach is that we didn’t have to take the site down at all. There was no chance of hidden ‘gotchas’ like before.”

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/// SCOTT MEHRING
An LRS Antilles Link Updater tool eliminated duplicate URL listings, and a Find and Replace Content tool replaced incorrect links, both of which saved immeasurable time locating and fixing issues on thousands of pages that might compromise search engine rankings. Repeated scans of rebuilt pages uncovered and repaired SEO errors discovered for links, load speed times, and meta titles and tags.

“LRS Antilles uses these super powerful tools in the process to convert pages correctly without errors, the way they need to be built for web spiders to read them,” said Bartlett. “And these tools save time for administrators like me. Nobody wants issues thrown back in their lap that are going to sap their time and take them away from other important work.”

The EOM blog had always provided SEO-rich content; however, revitalizing the standard content-string headline layout to a more dynamic thumbnail tiles format in five different languages had remained a pipe dream on the old CMS platform. The time and cost for the LRS development team to customize the code could not be justified. Based on experience the risk of breaks or downtime with version upgrades was far too great.

“Rich functionality is included out of the box with LRS Antilles, so there is less need to modify heavily, making breaks much less likely,” said Mehring. “But LRS Antilles was built for customization, so a relatively small amount of development time was added to the task list with this blog redesign request. It was no big deal.”
Results

The LRS Antilles migration has exceeded expectations when measured against the established objectives. For the primary SEO goal, a comparison of previous and current search engine rankings confirms SEO gains were not merely maintained, but significantly improved. Page rankings for key search terms have held or bettered their dominant positions for over 1,200 duplicated URL query strings. Site statistics reveal a 100% increase in organic site traffic over previous CMS levels, boosted from 27% to 54%, while new users have increased by 72%.

Regarding the smooth transition, the LRS Antilles CMS integration took place seamlessly without a single glitch. No ‘gotchas’, downtime, or breaks whatsoever. The unannounced switch was so uneventful that site visitors detected no change in the appearance, navigation, or usage of the site. Site statistics indicate user experience and engagement has actually been enhanced since the transition with PDF clicks increasing 142% and returning users increasing 72%. Mobile page load time has decreased by 59% and standard device page load time has decreased by 23%, serving content more efficiently for a superior digital experience.

Results by the Numbers

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<th>November 2018 Compared to November 2016</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PDF Clicks</td>
<td>142% Increase</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organic Traffic</td>
<td>100% Increase</td>
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<tr>
<td>Returning Users</td>
<td>72% Increase</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobile Page Load Time</td>
<td>59% Decrease</td>
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<tr>
<td>Device Page Load Time</td>
<td>23% Decrease</td>
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Finally, the look and feel of the blog has been reimagined and modernized to provide newsworthy and eye-catching content. International audiences are now greeted with clean and attractive blog tiles that can be easily scanned to locate articles of interest in the language of preference: English, German, French, Spanish, and Italian.

Not just a pretty face makeover, the LRS Antilles Blog module delivers functionality for administrators of all levels of technical expertise, from novice to full-fledged developer. Now team members in diverse company roles—technical writer, product support, software engineer, digital marketing manager—can publish articles like pros after taking a few minutes to master the intuitive content editor feature. This user-friendly editor extends to each and every page of the site, making all site updates and additions a simple task.

In the same way EOM software streamlines printing operations, LRS Antilles Content Manager simplifies website administration and upgrades for the software company. This lays the foundation for further development mandated by the ever-evolving industry through a web-based platform that helps the company stay proactive and agile in a competitive marketplace.

“Moving forward with LRS Antilles, I’m confident that we can make the right decisions on changes that are dictated by business, instead of settling for only what the technology will allow,” said Bartlett. “With LRS Antilles as our foundation, we are focused on the future, and the website will adapt no matter where we’re headed.”

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ABOUT LRS WEB SOLUTIONS

Founded in 1996 as a division of Levi, Ray & Shoup, Inc., LRS Web Solutions provides custom web design and development services to help customers achieve business success. Based in Springfield, Illinois, LRS Web Solutions employs a team of nearly thirty specialists in the areas of web design, web application development, content management systems, mobile apps, search engine optimization, website hosting, graphic design, audio and video production, and network support.